

# DRAFT

## ANIMAL ISSUES TASK FORCE

Monday, April 30, 2012

6:00 p.m.

4<sup>th</sup> Floor Conference Room – Busch Municipal Building

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Mary Collette, Chairwoman; Carl Woodland, Janet Martin, Gwen Evans, Randall Voss, Alicia Mathis, Kathleen Cowens, Dr. Rita Wittu, Cindy Larson, Carrie Galvan, Christian Mechlin, and Dr. Michael Stafford.

**MEMBERS**

**ABSENT:** None.

**STAFF PRESENT:** Kevin Gipson, Mike Brothers, and Karen Prescott, Health Department; Anita Baker Climer, City Clerk's Office.

**GUESTS:** Cindy Rushefsky, and Doug Burlison, Springfield City Council; Mary Crawford, SAAHouse Spay and Neuter Clinic; and Chris Best, Springfield News- Leader.

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Mary Collette, Chairwoman, called the meeting to order at approximately 6:00 p.m., and welcomed everyone.

Introductions of the members of the Task Force, City staff, and guests were conducted.

The members of the Task Force were sworn-in by Anita Baker Climer, City Clerk's Office.

Councilwoman Cindy Rushefsky, City Councilman Doug Burlison, and Chairwoman Collette thanked the members for their dedicated service to the Community and for serving on the Task Force.

A copy of the Task Force's charge was distributed to the members. *(Please refer to Exhibit A located within the City Clerk's Office for additional information.)*

Kevin Gipson, Director-Springfield/Greene County Health Department, noted that if anyone of the Task Force members would like a tour of the Animal Shelter to please contact/e-mail Ms. Climer, and the Health Department staff would schedule one. He also encouraged the members to consider taking a "ride along" with an animal control officer, which would require three or four hours, if he/she would like to do so.

Chairwoman Collette encouraged the members to schedule a tour of the Animal Shelter and do a "ride along" if he/she is available.

Chairwoman Collette asked for the Task Force to please consider including the possibility of making a goal regarding the Community becoming a "no kill" community relating to animals in the future, which the Task Force briefly discussed. She reported that there is significant funding/grants available for "no kill" communities.

Randall Voss briefly discussed Sarasota, Florida, which advocates that they are a "no kill" community, but apparently does euthanize some animals. He stated that he feels it is a "play on words."

Gwen Evans briefly explained that she feels euthanizing some animals is a better alternative than individuals "dumping" animals on the side of the road, and letting them starve to death.

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Dr. Michael Stafford expressed he feels that shelter improvements are needed first, and strive towards a “no kill” community.

Carrie Galvan noted that she is a dog trainer, and briefly commented that she feels some dogs even with training are not “adoptable” due to behavioral issues. She added that she feels education would be needed, as well as a good “behavioral evaluation system” should be implemented before an animal, such as a dog, is adopted out.

Janet Martin briefly encouraged the Task Force to review information regarding the Asilomar Accords, which is an organization that has documents/information comprised of the following four sections in relations to animal welfare: Guiding Principles, Definitions, Statistics and Formulas, and Glossary of Terms. She reported that she would provide the Task Force with information in the future. *(Please refer to Exhibit B located within the City Clerk’s Office for additional information.)*

Mr. Gipson briefly reported that the Health Department would be providing further information regarding the issue of animals, such a copy of a recent report relating to adoptable animals, to the Task Force for their next meeting in May.

Chairwoman Collette encouraged the members to possibly obtain a spiral notebook, so he/she could keep their meeting information in for a quick reference.

Mr. Voss suggested that the term “low kill” be used as opposed to “no kill.”

Several of the members expressed that they feel a definition of what a “no kill” community would consist of is needed.

During night’s meeting, Task Force briefly discussed their upcoming meeting dates/times schedule.

Per a consensus of the Task Force, the following dates were decided through September 2012, which would occur at 6:00 p.m. in the 4<sup>th</sup> Floor Conference Room – Busch Municipal Building unless otherwise noted on upcoming agendas:

Monday, May 21, 2012	Monday, June 25, 2012	Monday, July 30, 2012
Monday, August 27, 2012	Monday, September 24, 2012	

Mr. Gipson and Karen Prescott, Environmental Health Administrator-Health Department, gave a PowerPoint presentation entitled “Springfield/Greene county Health Department Animal Control Program Overview. *(Please refer to Exhibit C located within the City Clerk’s Office for additional information.)*

The following is an outline of the presentation:

- A. Major Functions
- B. Changing Face of Animal Control
- C. Program Challenges
- D. Opportunities
- E. Data for Calendar Year 2011
- F. Recent Trends: In-take
- G. Recent Trends: Dogs Rescued
- H. Recent Trends: Cats Rescued
- I. Recent Trends: Euthanasia (2 slides)
- J. Recent Trends: Cats Euthanasia

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- K. FY 2011 Budget Data
- L. St. Joseph & Springfield Animal Control Programs – FY 2009
- M. Animal Shelter (several slides including photos)
- N. However...
- O. Shelter Improvements (several slides including photos)
- P. Grooming & Vet Services
- Q. Partnerships
- R. Springfield Animal Advocacy Foundation
- S. Media Partner: Leigh's Lost & Found on KSPR
- T. Rescue Partners 2011
- U. Rescue Partners 2011, cont.
- V. Six-Month Dog Adoption Streak
- W. Six-Month Milestone Celebration
- X. Questions?

Mr. Gipson encouraged the members of the Task Force to ask questions during their meetings. He noted that Clay Goddard, Assistant Director-Health Department, was unable to attend tonight's meeting due to being out of town, but should be attending Task Force meetings in the future.

Mr. Gipson reiterated that the members of the Task Force are more than welcome to take a tour of the Health Department's Animal Shelter via arrangements by City staff, as well as to "ride along" with an animal control officer if he/she is available and would like to do so.

During the presentation, Mr. Gipson and Ms. Prescott briefly discussed that from late October 2011 through late April 2012, every potentially adoptable dog housed at the City's Animal Control Shelter was tagged by rescues to be put up for public adoption; however, this does not include cats nor pit bulls.

Mr. Gipson noted that the Health Department works with approximately 33 various organizations (i.e. rescue groups) regarding the issue of animal welfare and adoptions at this time. He added that Dr. Michael Stafford is the City's contract veterinarian. Mr. Gipson reported that the Health Department does charge a fee of \$20.00 for individuals who drop-off a dog or cat to the Health Department's Animal Shelter.

Mr. Gipson expressed that he feels the Health Department's Animal Shelter is significantly inadequate to fully accommodate the needs due to the size/space needed for the animals served, as well as the current location, which is located in a flood plain area and is land-locked to expand. He stated that a new Health Department Animal Shelter facility is needed. Mr. Gipson noted that City staff has conducted some research and has toured some other animal facilities, such as in Kansas City, and Little Rock, to review their facility operations.

Mr. Gipson informed the Task Force that only approximately 18% of owners claim their animals from the Health Department's Animal Shelter at this time.

Dr. Stafford noted that the maximum number of animals (i.e. dogs and cats) allowed for housing regarding the Health Department's Animal Shelter is 83.

Ms. Prescott briefly addressed that the Health Department has once again started to trap "feral cats" within the City. Due to previous budgetary cuts, trapping of "feral cats" was stopped by the Health Department for approximately the past two fiscal years.

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The Task Force, Mr. Gipson, and Ms. Prescott discussed the issue of animals within the Community.

Mr. Voss briefly explained that the Southwest Missouri Humane Society would begin imposing a \$20.00 fee regarding animals, such as dogs and cats, beginning tomorrow that are dropped off at the Society. He added that previously the Society only asked for a donation, which some individuals would give and some not, but with the increasing demand and costs associated with the animals, a fee had to be imposed. Mr. Voss reported that the Society also works with SAAHouse and a program called SNAP (Spay Neuter Assistance Program for low income individuals), which helps reduce the animal population regarding unwanted animals.

During the presentation, Mr. Gipson and Ms. Prescott responded to questions posed by the Task Force.

In response to a question posed by Ms. Evans, Ms. Prescott reported that the Health Department does not have a specific program regarding the issue of “feral cats,” but has started trapping these types of cats once again due to an increase in population. She noted that a “holding” of the “feral cat” is conducted for a period of time, and are euthanized if deemed as a “feral.”

Ms. Evans briefly expressed that she feels the data statistics provided regarding the issue of impounds seems to have a discrepancies, and should be reviewed. Mr. Gipson reported that City staff would review.

Chairwoman Collette informed the Task Force that the information received regarding the meetings, as well as the agendas and meeting minutes, would be posting on the Task Force’s webpage, which is under the Health Department’s website. She also noted that Mike Brothers, Public Information Administrator-Health Department, would be “blogging” about their meetings.

Mr. Brothers reported that City staff would be working together regarding providing information for the Task Force’s webpage.

Mr. Gipson informed the Task Force that due to budgetary restraints of Greene County, the Health Department is not providing animal control services within the urban services area in Greene County as of January 1, 2012. He reported that the Sheriff’s Department is handling animal bite calls, as well as responding to vicious dog complaints at this time.

In response to a question posed by Ms. Galvan, Mr. Gipson reported that City staff would provide the Task Force with information in the future regarding how many pit bulls are registered within the City at this time, as well the revenues received for pit bull registrations and the cost expense to the City since the passage of the pit bull ordinance. Mr. Gipson briefly discussed that he feels the City’s pit bull ordinance has been a success, and has been a positive impact within the Community. He noted that since the passage of this ordinance, fewer pit bulls have been euthanized by the City, and has saved the City money.

In response to a question posed by Mr. Voss, Mr. Gipson reported that the City does not have a “dog license” at this time, not since approximately 1978.

Ms. Prescott briefly explained that updates have been made to the Health Department’s Animal Shelter, which has improved the facility; however, amenities and space are limited for the staff to conduct their duties for the animals.

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Ms. Prescott reported that in 2011-2012, City Council designated approximately \$35,000 for spay/neuter surgeries for animals pulled from the City's Animal Shelter by rescue organizations. She added that she received word today that monies are being proposed within next year's fiscal budget regarding the issue of spay/neuter for animals.

Ms. Prescott informed the Task Force that the Health Department has been working with media partner, KSPR 33, regarding Leigh's Lost & Found, which is designed to help educate the Community regarding the lost and abandoned animals at the Health Department's Animal Shelter to try to reunite them with their owners.

Ms. Prescott invited the Task Force to attend the upcoming Six-Month Milestone Celebration on Friday, May 4, 2012 from 3-5 p.m. at the Phelps Grove Park Pavilion to celebrate the accomplishment of animal adoptions within the Community, which will include live music, treats for dogs and humans, games, and much more.

Chairwoman Collette briefly addressed that she would like to conduct the Task Force meetings no longer than approximately 1 ½ hours unless otherwise needed in the future.

Following the presentation, Chairwoman Collette thanked Mr. Gipson and Ms. Prescott for tonight's presentation.

Chairwoman Collette distributed a poster regarding the upcoming 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Big Hair Ball on May 11, 2012 at 7:00 p.m. in the Historic Firehouse, which is located at 101 East Commercial. She noted that the proceeds would benefit the SAAHouse Spay and Neuter Clinic. *(Please refer to Exhibit D located within the City Clerk's Office for additional information.)*

Councilman Burlison asked for the Task Force to please consider the possibility of the City working with a local shelter, such as the Humane Society, (i.e. Public/Private relationship) regarding the issue of animal welfare in the Community in the future. He noted that the City of St. Louis, Missouri has apparently "abandoned" their shelter operations, and works with their local animal shelter in relations to animal welfare.

Mr. Voss briefly discussed that the Southwest Missouri Humane Society has a new executive director, Darin Landrum, who began working on March 1, 2012. He noted that a centralized 24-hour "lost and found" phone number is being implemented at the Society for citizens to contact, so he/she can try to locate their lost animal in the near future.

Ms. Martin requested information be provided to the Task Force from the Southwest Missouri Humane Society regarding their facts and figures pertaining to the Society. Mr. Voss reported that he would obtain information for the Task Force in the future.

Mr. Gipson briefly reported that there are numerous models in relations to animal welfare facilities, such as one located in Little Rock, Arkansas, which the Health Department would be reviewing with the Task Force in the future, as well as the issue of "best practices." Dr. Stafford noted that a discussion regarding the issue of public health and animal shelter facilities should also be addressed.

In relations to a question posed by Mr. Gipson, Chairwoman Collette noted that she would like the Task Force to review and discuss some models and "best practices" in relations to animal welfare facilities at the next meeting. She reported that she feels that presenters from other entities, such as Little Rock, should not yet be invited to speak to the Task Force until the members can obtain/review some additional information.

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Mr. Gipson briefly addressed that the City's Animal Shelter is not a typical shelter for animals, but is an animal "pound" where stray and incarcerated animals, such as dogs and cats, are housed until either their owners pay their fees and take them home in an appropriate time frame, are picked up by another facility, such as CARE, for adoption, or if not adoptable, such as a sick animal or a pit bull, are euthanized.

Mr. Gipson noted that more funding would be needed for a new shelter and/or to contract out some services with another shelter facility, such as the Southwest Humane Society, in the future.

The Task Force and City staff made final comments regarding the issue of animals in the Community.

Mr. Brothers noted that Chairwoman Collette should probably work with the City Clerk's Office regarding any topics/issues/ideas for upcoming discussion (i.e. an "idea board" or a "menu of items") the Task Force would like to review for future meetings.

Ms. Collette noted that no deadline has been issued regarding how many months the Task Force would be meeting to address their charge at this time.

Per the request of Ms. Evans, Ms. Climer informed the Task Force that she would send an e-mail listing tomorrow, so the Task Force could contact one another when needed in the future. *(Please refer to Exhibit E located within the City Clerk's Office for additional information.)*

With no further business, the Task Force meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:30 p.m.